

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 194966

NODIS

CHEROKEE

FOLLOWING REPEAT SECTO 8159 SENT ACTION SECSTATE, WHITE HOUSE
13 AUG 77

QUOTE S E C R E T SECTO 8159

NODIS/CHEROKEE

WHITE HOUSE FOR THE PRESIDENT AND DR. BREZEZINSKI ONLY

FROM THE SECRETARY.

DEPARTMENT FOR ACTING SECRETARY AND PETER TARNOFF ONLY

FROM THE SECRETARY.

E.O. 11652:XGDS

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)

SUBJ: OWEN-VANCE TALKS WITH BOTHA

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1. AFTER OWEN AND I CONFERRED FOR TWO HOURS THIS MORN-
ING TO REVIEW KEY SUBSTANTIVE POINTS AND TACTICS, WE MET
WITH PIK BOTHA FOR FIVE AND ONE-HALF HOURS.

2. BOTHA CAME NOT AS A STRONG ADVOCATE FOR A PARTICU-
LAR LINE ON THE RHODESIAN ISSUE, BUT MORE TO LISTEN AND

PROBE REGARDING THE SCOPE OF THE U.K.-U.S. PROPOSALS AND WHAT WE EXPECT OF SOUTH AFRICA. HE WAS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY RESTRAINED AND, AT TIMES, ALMOST RESIGNED IN HIS ATTITUDE. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS GOOD AND THE DISCUSSION WAS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND OPEN THROUGHOUT THE SESSION.

3. BOTHA DID, HOWEVER, EXPRESS HIS GOVERNMENT'S APPREHENSION ABOUT WHAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE THE U.S. AND U.K. INTENTION TO APPLY INCREASING PRESSURES ON SOUTH AFRICA REGARDLESS OF PROGRESSIVE MOVES IT MAY TAKE IN ITS DOMESTIC SITUATION. IN THIS HE FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE LINE PM VORSTER HAD TAKEN IN A SPEECH LAST FRIDAY WHEN VORSTER ACCUSED THE U.S. OF FOLLOWING A STRATEGY OF "STRANGULATION WITH FINESSE."

4. OWEN CAREFULLY DESCRIBED THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK, THE ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND (ZDF), AND TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS. HE TOOK PAINS TO EXPLAIN HOW THE FUND WOULD OPERATE TO REINFORCE THE CONFIDENCE OF WHITES AND MAINTAIN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.

5. DURING THE ENSUING DISCUSSION, BOTHA SOUGHT CLARIFICATION OF A NUMBER OF KEY ISSUES INCLUDING:

- CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR WHITES;
 - TIMING OF THE PUBLIC RELEASE OF THE PROPOSALS;
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- OUR PLANS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH SMITH;
- A SCENARIO FOR IMPLEMENTATION;
- CONSEQUENCES, IF ANY, OF THE PARTIES REJECTING THE PROPOSALS; AND
- WHETHER THE U.K. AND THE U.S. ARE DETERMINED TO STAND BY THE RESULTS OF THE PROCESS.

6. FOLLOWING IS THE ESSENCE OF THE DISCUSSION OF EACH OF THOSE FIVE POINTS:

- A) BOTHA WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BLOCKING MECHANISMS WHICH MIGHT BE BUILT INTO THE CONSTITUTION TO PROTECT WHITE INTERESTS. WE EXPLAINED THESE WOULD BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE CONCEPT OF ONE PERSON, ONE VOTE AND WOULD BE REJECTED BY THE AFRICANS. WE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT CERTAIN FEATURES ARE DESIGNED TO BUILD A CLIMATE OF CONFIDENCE, E.G., RESTRAINTS ON THE AMENDMENT OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION, THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE ON ITS OBLIGATIONS AND THE CONTINUED AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FROM THE ZDF, AND THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS. BOTHA NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO MAKE THE BILL OF RIGHTS NON-AMENDABLE FOR

AN INITIAL PERIOD OF YEARS. WE AGREED TO CONSIDER THIS.

B) BOTHA REPEATEDLY URGED THAT WE NOT MAKE OUR PROPOSALS PUBLIC UNTIL AFTER THE RHODESIAN ELECTIONS. HE ARGUED THAT THEIR PUBLICATION COULD UNDERMINE SMITH'S EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THE ELECTORAL MANDATE HE IS SEEKING, OR FORCE HIM INTO A PREMATURE PUBLIC REJECTION OF THE PROPOSALS. RESPONDING, WE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING THE PRESENT MOMENTUM GIVEN THE DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT FIGHTING COULD ACCELERATE SHARPLY IN COMING WEEKS, THUS POSING EVEN MORE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. WE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS WOULD BE SUSPICIOUS OF A DELAY AND, BESIDES, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE

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THAT SMITH WOULD BE MORE AMENABLE AFTER THE ELECTION.

C) BOTHA ASKED IF WE EXPECTED SOUTH AFRICA TO SELL OUR PROPOSALS TO SMITH. WE REPLIED THAT TO DO SO WOULD SERVE SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERESTS AS WELL AS OURS. WITHOUT COMMITTING HIMSELF IN ANY WAY ON THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR PROPOSALS, BOTHA UNDERTOOK TO TAKE SOUNDINGS IN PRETORIA AND SALISBURY EARLY NEXT WEEK. WE NOTED THAT OWEN AND ANDY YOUNG WOULD THEN BE TRAVELLING TO AFRICA TO CONSULT WITH THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS AND RHODESIAN NATIONALISTS. IN THIS CONNECTION, DAVID OWEN AND I NOW AGREE THAT HE AND ANDY SHOULD TRY TO SEE THE FRONT LINE BEFORE TALKING AGAIN WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS.

D) AT BOTHA'S REQUEST, OWEN DESCRIBED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION WHICH WE ENVISAGE BEGINNING WITH NEXT WEEK'S CONSULTATIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA EXTENDING THROUGH OUR PRESENTATION TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL, AND CULMINATING IN ACTION BY THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT TO ENACT A NEW CONSTITUTION. WE STRESSED OUR DETERMINATION TO GO FORWARD WITH THIS PROCESS WITHOUT ALLOWING ANY OF THE PARTIES TO EXERCISE A VETO.

E) BOTHA ASKED WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE SHOULD SMITH REJECT THE PROPOSALS. THIS GAVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THE POINT THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S SUPPORT OF RHODESIA WOULD LEAD TO A STRONG REACTION IN THE UN, INCLUDING SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. BOTHA REACTED STRONGLY AND HINTED THAT ACTION AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA WOULD FORCE THEM TO CLOSE THEIR BORDERS WITH BOTSWANA, LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND, THUS IMPOSING SEVERE HARDSHIPS. WE TOLD BOTHA WE HOPED THAT THE SANCTIONS THRESHOLD WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE CROSSED AND EMPHASIZED WE WERE NOT LOOKING FOR A FIGHT.

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F) NEAR THE END OF THE DISCUSSION, BOTHA ASKED (1) WHETHER WE WOULD STAND BY WHATEVER GOVERNMENT THAT EMERGED FROM THE PROCESS; (2) WHETHER WE ACCEPTED THE FACT THAT FIGHTING MIGHT CONTINUE AFTER ELECTIONS, AND (3) WHETHER WE WOULD GO AHEAD EVEN IF MUGABE WOULD NOT ACCEPT OUR PLAN. WE EMPHATICALLY ASSURED HIM WE WOULD ACCEPT THE RESULTS OF FAIR ELECTIONS REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME; THAT WE RECOGNIZED THAT THERE COULD BE FIGHTING NOT ONLY AFTER THE ELECTIONS BUT ALSO AT ANY TIME DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD; AND THAT MUGABE'S REFUSAL TO PLAY BALL WOULD NOT DETER US.

G) BOTHA MADE CLEAR THAT HE WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO EXPRESS ANY DEFINITE VIEWS ON WHAT WE HAD TOLD HIM, BUT WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT WITH VORSTER. HE SEEMED IMPRESSED BY OUR RESOLVE TO MOVE AHEAD (INCLUDING UN ACTION), BY THE DETAILED NATURE OF OUR PLANNING AND BY THE FACT THAT WE WERE PUTTING THE PROPOSAL TO THEM WITHOUT FIRST CLEARING IT WITH THE FRONT LINE AND THE NATIONALISTS. I ALSO THINK THAT, EXPECTING THE WORST FROM US, BOTHA WAS FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY THE NON-CONFRONTATIONAL PRESENTATION OF THE PACKAGE.

I BELIEVE, MOREOVER, THAT THE SHAH'S RECENT WARNING TO SOUTH AFRICA REGARDING OIL SHIPMENTS TO RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA'S WORSENING FINANCIAL SITUATION HAVE HAD A SOBERING EFFECT ON SOUTH AFRICANS.

7. BOTHA TOLD US THAT THEIR CABINET MEETS NEXT TUESDAY AND THAT WE WOULD BE INFORMED OF THEIR REACTION SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

VANCE

UNQUOTE VANCE

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